

THE FIFTH DAY.

FRIDAY, THE 2nd MARCH 1928.

The Assembly met again at 11-30 A. M. on the 2nd March 1928.

68. Aids to municipalities.

Mr. M. M. ABRAHAM MALIAKAL (*Member, Municipal Council, Kottayam*) said that the Dewan who had acquired intimate knowledge about every nook and corner of the country might certainly be aware of the paucity of good roads in North Travancore, particularly in the Kottayam town. The municipal council, Kottayam, was putting forth its best efforts to improve the roads in the town. It had spent very nearly Rs. 950 for maintenance and repair of roads in the year 1102 itself. But the grant which Government were giving for the purpose was only Rs. 400. The municipality was also doing its best to open new roads in the town. It had spent nearly Rs. 8,000 under this head. But many more roads remained either to be repaired or to be newly opened. In the Budget for 1103 a sum of Rs. 7,000 was allotted for the purpose. The financial condition of the municipality did not, however, justify such large expenditure every year. It was absolutely necessary therefore that Government should contribute at least 50 per cent. of the expenditure incurred by the municipality for the opening of new roads.

Another item of expenditure which bore hard on the municipality was the court fees paid on the complaints preferred by the council under the Municipal Regulation. The expenditure on this head now came to about Rs. 800 a year. It would be a great help not only to the Kottayam municipality but to all municipalities if the complaints preferred by them were exempted from the operation of the Court Fees Regulation, or if Sirkar stamps were permitted to be used by the municipalities.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Abraham Maliakal, I must congratulate the Kottayam municipality on its enterprise in the matter of road-making within the town. Your suggestion that Government should contribute one half of the cost of road-making cannot be viewed in isolation as regards Kottayam itself. It is a comprehensive proposal which will affect all municipalities and as such it is a large question which will require careful consideration.

In regard to the exemption of municipal petitions from court fees, as you know, it is not in accordance with the provisions of the Court Fees Regulation and any change will necessitate an amendment of the law possibly in more directions than one. However, the question has been raised by the municipalities of Shencottah and Quilon and the Government have already instituted an enquiry in the matter.

69. Amendment of the provisions of the Municipal Regulation relating to the election of municipal councillors.

Mr. M. V. NARAYANAN NAMPUTIRIPAD (*Member, Municipal Council, Alwaye*) pointed out certain defects in the rules for the election of municipal councillors issued by Government under date the 5th January 1921. The rules, in his opinion, stood in need of amendment. As specific instances where they were defective, he pointed out rule 26 relating to identification of voters, rules 28 and 29 relating to the recording of votes by illiterate persons, and the rules regarding the disposal of election petitions. According to the existing rules, disputes arising out of elections were to be decided by the Dewan Peishkars or their Assistants, who, it was hardly necessary to say, were incompetent to tackle the intricate questions of law raised before them. The member suggested that the jurisdiction for the settlement of election disputes should be vested either in District Judges or in commissions